

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. An end fence for use in a sheet feeding cassette having a bottom plate which is rotatable up and down while being biased upward, the end fence comprising:

5 an end fence main body that is attached to the sheet feeding cassette and movable in a direction along a feeding direction of sheets loaded on the bottom plate;

 a fixing device configured to fix the end fence main body at any desired position in the sheet feeding cassette;

 a sheet pressing element configured to press against trailing edges of the sheets loaded
10 on the bottom plate, the sheet pressing element being provided to the end fence main body, being movable in the sheet feeding direction, and protruding from the end fence main body forward in the feeding direction when the sheet pressing element moves in the sheet feeding direction;

 a biasing device configured to bias the sheet pressing element in the feeding direction;

15 and

 a bias force switching device configured to switch between a biasing condition, in which a bias force of the biasing device is exerted on the sheet pressing element, and a non-biasing condition, in which a bias force of the biasing device is not exerted on the sheet pressing element.

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2. The end fence according to claim 1, wherein the bias force switching device further comprises:

 a switch operation unit operated for switching between the biasing condition and the non-biasing condition; and

a movable element configured to move the biasing device in accordance with a switching operation of the switch operation unit to a biasing position, where the bias force of the biasing device is exerted on the sheet pressing element, and to a non-biasing position, where the bias force of the biasing device is not exerted on the sheet pressing element.

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3. The end fence according to claim 1, further comprising an automatic returning device configured to automatically return the bias force switching device to the biasing condition from the non-biasing condition.

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4. The end fence according to claim 1, wherein the bias force switching device is configured to switch the biasing device to exert the bias force on the sheet pressing element by pushing the sheet feeding cassette into a first predetermined position, and to switch the biasing device not to exert the bias force on the sheet pressing element by pulling the sheet feeding cassette out to a second predetermined position.

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5. The end fence according to claim 1, further comprising a link device configured to substantially simultaneously link switching to the biasing condition with fixing of the end fence main body, and to substantially simultaneously link switching to the non-biasing condition with releasing of the end fence main body.

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6. The end fence according to claim 1, wherein the sheet pressing element is attached to the end fence main body.

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7. The end fence according to claim 1, wherein the sheet pressing element is integrally formed with the end fence main body.

8. The end fence according to claim 1, wherein the biasing device further comprises a plate spring configured to exert a bias force on the sheet pressing element.

5 9. The end fence according to claim 8, wherein the plate spring is integrally formed with the sheet pressing element.

10 10. The end fence according to claim 8, wherein the plate spring is attached to the end fence main body.

11. The end fence according to claim 1, wherein the biasing device further comprises a coil spring configured to exert a bias force on the sheet pressing element.

12. A sheet feeding cassette, comprising:

15 a cassette main body configured to accommodate sheets;

 a bottom plate that is provided at a bottom surface part of the cassette main body and is rotatable up and down while being biased upward; and

 the end fence of one of claims 1 through 11.

20 13. A sheet feeding device, comprising:

 the sheet feeding cassette of claim 12; and

 a sheet feeding member configured to feed the sheets in the cassette main body one by one.

25 14. An image forming apparatus, comprising:

the sheet feeding device of claim 13; and
an image forming device configured to form an image on the sheet fed by the sheet feeding device.

5 15. An end fence for use in a sheet feeding cassette having a bottom plate which is rotatable up and down while being biased upward, the end fence comprising:

an end fence main body that is attached to the sheet feeding cassette and movable in a direction along a feeding direction of sheets loaded on the bottom plate;

fixing means for fixing the end fence main body at any desired position in the sheet feeding cassette;

sheet pressing means for pressing against trailing edges of the sheets loaded on the bottom plate, the sheet pressing means being provided to the end fence main body and being movable in the sheet feeding direction, and protruding from the end fence main body forward in the sheet feeding direction when the sheet pressing means moves in the sheet feeding direction;

15 biasing means for biasing the sheet pressing means in the feeding direction; and

bias force switching means for switching between a biasing condition, in which a bias force of the biasing means is exerted on the sheet pressing means, and a non-biasing condition, in which a bias force of the biasing means is not exerted on the sheet pressing means.

20 16. The end fence according to claim 15, wherein the bias force switching means further comprises:

a switch operation unit operated for switching between the biasing condition and the non-biasing condition; and

movable means for moving the biasing means in accordance with a switching operation
25 of the switch operation unit to a biasing position, where the bias force of the biasing means is

exerted on the sheet pressing means, and to a non-biasing position, where the bias force of the biasing means is not exerted on the sheet pressing means.

17. The end fence according to claim 15, further comprising automatic returning means
5 for automatically returning the bias force switching means to the biasing condition from the non-biasing condition.

18. The end fence according to claim 15, further comprising linking means for
substantially simultaneously linking switching to the biasing condition with fixing of the end
10 fence main body by the fixing means, and for substantially simultaneously linking switching to the non-biasing condition with releasing of the end fence main body.